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'Plot or Politics': Inside On JFK Death Probe

By JOHN M'MILLAN

The bullets that killed President John F. Kennedy that November day in 1963 stimulated a chain of events to which the last link has not yet been added.

The forging of one of those links is going on in New Orleans now. Whether this part of the chain will withstand the strain of strenuous examination or whether it will prove to be the work of poor metallurgy remains to be seen.

The ore was mined in Louisiana and the craftsmanship involved may be put to trial next month.

TWO NEW ORLEANS States-Item reporters, Rosemary James and Jack Wardlaw, have combined their talents and efforts to present in a book a factual, newspaper-like account of the mining and the miner, Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison.

"Plot or Politics? The Garrison Case & Its Cast" is the story of the person and places involved in Louisiana vs. Shaw. Shaw is retired New Orleans businessman Clay L. Shaw, charged by Garrison with conspiring to murder President Kennedy.

Both reporters know the case well. They tell the tale many know and reveal sidelights known only to those closest to the case.

YET AS THEY SAY in the foreword: "We have no theories to peddle. We do not sit in judgment of the Warren Commission Report or attempt to prove it right or wrong, nor do we set out to establish whether Garrison's investigation is valid."

What do they do, you ask? They tell, about events, about people, about places and about theories. Often their account, particularly in characterizations, is sparkling. The writing is slick, smooth, straightforward.

Only occasionally is a passage drab. The main problem of the book is a lack of good editing

None of this hurts the book's substance. It is just something for reviewers to point out and writers to correct in the next edition.

THE BEST THING about the book is the way it has of getting to the point. Here the talent and training of good reporters shine. The book is all meat. The excess fat included in many books by assassination buffs turned "writers" is held to a minimum.

The 167-page book contains nine chapters, six of them about the main characters in Garrison's investigation — the DA himself, Shaw, David William Ferrie, Dean A. Andrews, Perry Russo and Gordon Novel. There is a thorough appendix listing the persons involved in the DA's probe. Many of the names are known to only the principals and a few insiders.

The "Politics" part of the book weaved carefully through the "Plot" gives the reader, almost as an added attraction, an insight into recent New Orleans and Louisiana political history.

But the main character is the search for a conspiracy. Soon the world will know whether Garrison "has anything." When the trial comes there will be no better program than "Plot or Politics."

The book was produced by the Pelican Publishing House.